

Introduction

Get there first, with the most men.

Lt. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest, CSA (1821-1877)

The end of the Cold War caused fundamental changes in the international security situation and US military strategy, resulting in a profound redirection of our Army's roles and missions. For more than fifty years, the Army was concerned with deterring, and if necessary, defeating Soviet aggression on the NATO Central Front. Forces, equipment, policies and procedures were all directed toward achieving that overriding goal. The Army relied heavily on forward basing of forces, backed up by prepositioned stockpiles of equipment on which roundout and reinforcing units could be assembled. Plans for rapid transfer of forces from the CONUS were directed towards reinforcement of the European theater, with relatively little attention given to other contingency theaters. Even after the establishment of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force, and later, US CENTCOM, which focused on Southwest Asia, Europe remained the centerpiece of US Army planning.

Today, the probability of warfare in Central Europe is low. On the other hand, the military situation in the Balkans, Middle East, Central Asia, Africa, and the Asiatic Rim— is extremely unstable and unpredictable. New states and regional powers have emerged to fill the vacuum left by the collapse of the Soviet Union. Some of these have inherited or assembled formidable armed forces, often equipped with the latest generation of weapons. A number of these are openly hostile to the United States, and are positioned to threaten our vital political and economic interests. In place of a single, well-defined enemy limited to a single theater of operations, the Army today must cope with many potential adversaries, of widely divergent capabilities and operational methods, located all over the world.

Further complicating the situation is the reduction of the Army force structure at the end of the Cold War and the bulk of combat forces returning to CONUS. In order for the Army to fulfill its role, it must be capable of rapidly deploying forces to any potential theater of operations and be able to achieve the military objectives set by the NCA. The fundamental posture of the Army has changed from forward deployment to power projection.

Power projection presents the Army with a range of problems and challenges substantially different from those of the Cold War. The Army must be capable of full spectrum dominance possessing a power projection capability sufficient to ensure everything from humanitarian support using military infrastructure to force projection of combat units in a conflict. Power projection is not a new mission, but not since World War II has it reached such prominence. Power projection operations of the recent past, including Grenada, Panama, Somalia, Bosnia, and the Persian Gulf, while successful, were characterized by varying degrees of inefficiency, as measured by time necessary to meet the JFC's requirements for force closure. Reductions in Army force structure, combined with basic changes in the nature of war, make such inefficiencies unacceptable in future power projection operations.

The process of RSO&I of the deploying forces in the theater of operations is often referred to as the "Achilles heel" of deployment. RSO&I is a new term for an old problem: how to receive personnel and equipment into a theater of operations, rejoin these elements into combat ready units, and integrate these units into the theater's command structure. In the Cold War era, reliance on forward basing and prepositioned equipment tended to mask the importance of RSO&I. The main objective was to receive REFORGER units and link them with their POMCUS. It was not until the large-scale deployment of forces to Operation Desert Shield that the Army rediscovered the difficulties inherent in moving large bodies of troops and their

equipment, over intercontinental distances, and reforming them into combat units in-theater. Other operations since then experienced the same problems on a smaller scale.

RSO&I is a process by which combat power is generated. Often viewed as a logistics problem, it is, in fact, a critical operational challenge that relies on a logistical infrastructure for successful execution. In a power projection environment, the ability to execute any mission largely depends on the speed with which combat power can be assembled at required locations. This involves much more than merely bringing soldiers and equipment into the theater. Rather, these segments must be efficiently received, rapidly formed into units, expeditiously moved to Tactical Assembly Areas, and seamlessly integrated into mission operations. Moreover, numbers, types, and sequencing of these units must support the commander's concept of operations. As a result, RSO&I must be included in the earliest operational planning.

In the early stages of planning, there are periods of time—critical windows of opportunity—where commanders make irrevocable decisions concerning deploying units in a time phased sequence. Subsequent changes made will result in disruption to deployment. Most RSO&I inefficiencies result from integrating RSO&I inadequately into operational plans, or commanders changing deployment schedules without considering the impact on either time-sequenced units or RSO&I throughput. Troops unable to join up with equipment, or depart staging area on time, create a lucrative target. Against aggressive adversaries armed with modern weapons or an asymmetric threat capability, such inefficiency reduces force effectiveness and threatens mission success.

To increase force projection effectiveness, the Army is developing improved procedures, processes, and decision tools to provide the commander and his staff with the ability to make RSO&I an integral part of operational planning. The purpose of this manual is to improve deployment by:

- Identifying key RSO&I concepts and issues,
- Providing guidelines for planning at each stage of the process, and
- Identifying the types of tools and decision aids required.

These concepts, properly integrated into deliberate and crisis action planning and executed with appropriate tools, add a world class, full-spectrum deployment capability to the Army's existing world class combat ability.